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ABSTRACT

The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, Alberta, Canada, serves as the body through which Alberta's postsecondary institutions work in a cooperative manner to ensure effective transferability. Basic to the work of the Council is the principle that a student should not have to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated, nor be granted more transfer credit than previous learning would warrant. While actively involved with transfer credit issues, the 15-member Council is also interested in admission policies from a systemwide perspective. This annual report outlines the Council's mandate, mission, and goals, and describes some of the initiatives undertaken or completed since the last annual report. In May 2002 the Council published the 27th annual edition of the "Alberta Transfer Guide," a description that reflected 27,504 transfer agreements and 36 institutions in Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. The transfer guide has been made available online, and the network of institutional representatives ("Contact Persons") also is described online. Work has begun on a common grading scale for Alberta institutions of higher education, communication links have been maintained with student organizations. The Council has continued its emphasis on admissions to enable students to make smooth transitions from secondary education. Other information dissemination and online efforts are described, and work toward the Business Plan goals and objectives is outlined. Addenda include: (1) a list of Council members; (2) terms of reference; (3) principles, policies, and procedures; (4) the Alberta transfer model; and (5) a list of Council publications. (SLD)

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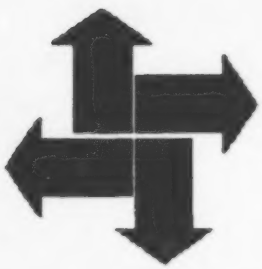
TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2002 -
31 March 2003



ALBERTA COUNCIL ON ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER

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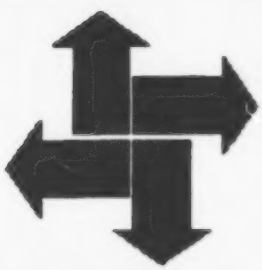
31 March 2003



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15 July 2003

The Honourable Lyle Oberg
Minister of Learning
204 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Dear Dr. Oberg:

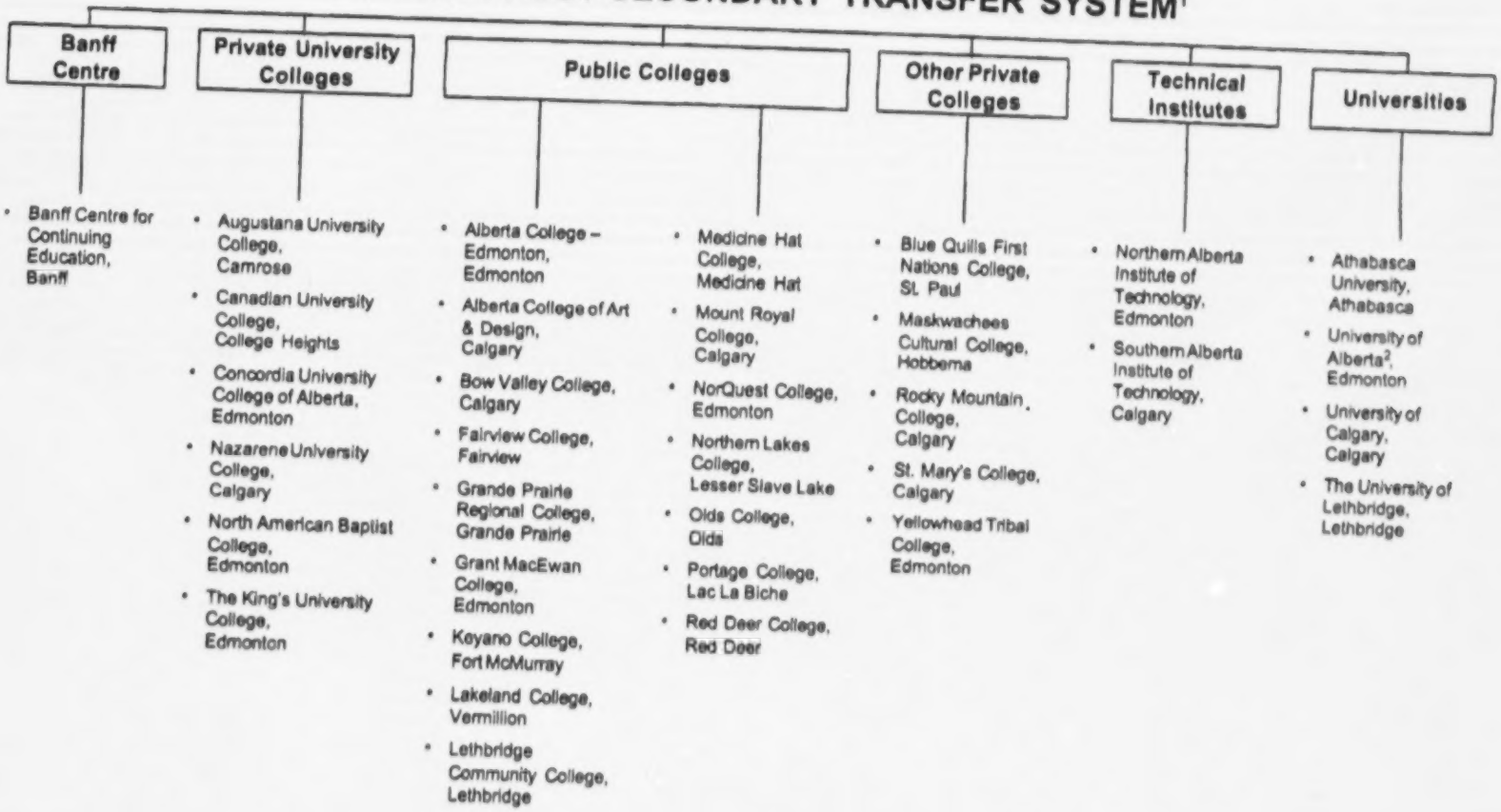
On behalf of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer and in accordance with Council's terms of reference, I have the honour of providing you with the Twenty-eighth Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2003.

Sincerely,

Lucille R. Walter

Lucille R. Walter, BEd, DipEd
Chair

ALBERTA POST-SECONDARY TRANSFER SYSTEM[1]


Banff Centre
Banff Centre for Continuing Education, Banff
Private University Colleges
Augustana University College, Camrose
Canadian University College, College Heights
Concordia University College of Alberta, Edmonton
Nazarene University College, Calgary
North American Baptist College, Edmonton
The King's University College, Edmonton
Public Colleges
Alberta College – Edmonton, Edmonton
Alberta College of Art & Design, Calgary
Bow Valley College, Calgary
Fairview College, Fairview
Grande Prairie Regional College, Grande Prairie
Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton
Keyano College, Fort McMurray
Lakeland College, Vermillion
Lethbridge Community College, Lethbridge
Medicine Hat College, Medicine Hat
Mount Royal College, Calgary
NorQuest College, Edmonton
Northern Lakes College, Lesser Slave Lake
Olds College, Olds
Portage College, Lac La Biche
Red Deer College, Red Deer
Other Private Colleges
Blue Quills First Nations College, St. Paul
Maskwachees Cultural College, Hobbema
Rocky Mountain College, Calgary
St. Mary's College, Calgary
Yellowhead Tribal College, Edmonton
Technical Institutes
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Edmonton
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Calgary
Universities
Athabasca University, Athabasca
University of Alberta[2], Edmonton
University of Calgary, Calgary
The University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge

[1] This chart contains public institutions and those with transfer agreements in Section III of the *Transfer Guide*. In addition, the *Guide* includes transfer agreements with Aurora College and Nunavut Arctic College in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, Nechi Institute on Alcohol and Drug Education, and Transport Canada. There are other organizations, private and non-affiliated colleges and private vocational schools in Alberta, some of which may offer courses that are transferable.

[2] University of Alberta has a formal affiliation agreement with North American Baptist College, Edmonton under which certain courses offered by the College will be accepted by the University for transfer credit. St. Joseph's College and St. Stephen's College are affiliated with the University of Alberta and are located on the University's campus.

Source: 2002-2003 Alberta Transfer Guide

INTRODUCTION

Student transfer involves the portability of educational credit among post-secondary institutions. Based on successful completion of studies at an Alberta post-secondary institution, students receive transfer credit, where appropriate, upon admission to an educational program in another Alberta post-secondary institution. The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) serves as a body through which Alberta's post-secondary institutions work in a co-operative manner to ensure effective transferability. Basic to the work of Council is the principle that a student should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated, nor be granted more transfer credit than previous learning experiences would warrant for successful completion of the program.

Established in 1974 at the request of post-secondary institutions, Council operates with the support of the Minister of Learning and the co-operation of Alberta's post-secondary institutions. The 15-member Council includes the Chair and representatives from the public, students, universities, public colleges and technical institutes, private university colleges, and a secondary system member from Alberta Learning. Council reports annually to the Minister of Learning. The services of the Executive Officer and other Secretariat staff are provided by Alberta Learning in the fulfillment of Council's responsibilities. Council membership is recorded in Addendum A, its Terms of Reference in Addendum B, its Principles, Policies and Procedures in Addendum C, the Alberta Transfer Model in Addendum D, and a list of current publications in Addendum E.

Post-secondary institutions have statutory responsibility for admission and transfer decisions. Those that are part of the Alberta transfer system are committed to Council's Principles, Policies, and Procedures while retaining full responsibility to develop and implement their admission and transfer policies. As part of its leadership role, Council encourages them to co-operate for the benefit of students. While actively involved with transfer credit issues, Council is also interested in admission policies from a system-wide perspective. These policies not only affect the ability of students to transfer credit, but provide the key linkage between the secondary and post-secondary systems.

Council's Principles, Policies and Procedures act as a framework to facilitate transfer agreements among institutions. Council encourages the maintenance of sound transfer agreements in a changing environment. Where appropriate, it encourages negotiations for programs and courses not presently covered by transfer agreements. These negotiated transfer agreements, together with institutional admission policies respecting transfer students, are compiled and published by Council in its annual *Alberta Transfer Guide* and made available on the Internet through the Online Alberta Transfer Guide.

To facilitate communication with and between institutions, Council has established a network of institutional representatives called "Contact Persons". Presently this network of Contact Persons includes a representative from each of 36 post-secondary institutions. In accordance with its terms of reference, the ACAT Secretariat is actively engaged in the day-to-day work of ensuring that

institutional admission policies and transfer agreements are in accordance with Council's Principles, Policies, and Procedures. Where difficulties arise, it provides consultation and mediation to ameliorate or resolve concerns. In addition, by identifying potential transfer agreements, Council serves as a catalyst to bring about improvement.

COUNCIL'S MANDATE, MISSION, VISION AND GOALS

Mandate

The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) serves as an independent body through which stakeholders work co-operatively for the benefit of learners to ensure smooth secondary to post-secondary transition and effective transferability of courses or programs for students.

ACAT provides leadership to Alberta's post-secondary transfer system to achieve:

- increased educational opportunities for adult learners through student transfer; and
- accurate information for learners about admission and transfer opportunities.

ACAT operates with the support of the Minister of Learning and the co-operation of Alberta's post-secondary institutions. Student transfer involves the portability of educational credit among programs. Based on successful completion of studies, students receive transfer credit, where appropriate, upon admission to an educational program in an Alberta post-secondary institution.

Vision

ACAT learners access post-secondary education through a nationally and internationally recognized admissions and transfer system.

Mission

The mission of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer is to be a catalyst for necessary change and an advocate for learners in the areas of admission and transfer to educational programs.

ACAT provides leadership and direction in the improvement and enlargement of educational opportunities for Alberta learners through inter-institutional transfer. This requires a commitment to improving communication among and between Alberta's post-secondary institutions, as well as stakeholders in the trades and secondary system, and to promoting the advantages of a system of education, with all that means for educational planning for the benefit of learners.

To carry out its mission, ACAT:

- identifies issues and explores resolutions to these issues with stakeholders,

- advocates for learners at both a general level through its Principles and a specific level through interaction of ACAT's staff with learners,
- communicates with stakeholders and encourages communication among stakeholders on matters regarding admissions and transfer, and
- provides a forum for discussion of issues arising out of environmental change and trends related to post-secondary education.

ACAT is a leader in ensuring that learners have access to a highly effective and efficient transfer system. ACAT inspires partner institutions to guarantee that prior learning of prospective students is appropriately recognized upon admission.

All individuals and groups, who provide or benefit from opportunities to learn, share responsibility for realizing the vision for student transfer in Alberta.

ACAT is guided by its Principles and pre-eminently by principle (a), which states that student access to higher education and the opportunity for student mobility among post-secondary institutions in Alberta shall be optimized. Barriers to student mobility shall be minimized. The integrity of educational programs and certification must, however, be maintained. A student should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated nor should more transfer credit be granted than previous learning experiences would warrant for successful completion of the program.

Goals

ACAT has four goals that are necessary to realize its mandate:

Admission
Learners will be admitted to programs on the basis of the relevance and quality of their total educational experiences.

Transfer
Learners will receive appropriate educational credit when they transfer from one Alberta program to another.

Communication
Learners will have access to current, accurate information on admission requirements and transfer policies as well as course and program transfer opportunities.

Education and Advocacy
As ACAT advocates for best practices on admissions and transfer in Alberta, stakeholders will be informed about its benefits. As other jurisdictions begin to establish their own admissions and transfer systems, the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer will serve as a model and will provide encouragement and advice on best practices.

ALBERTA TRANSFER GUIDE – 27th Edition

In May 2002 the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer published the 27th annual edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*. The first *Transfer Guide*, published for the 1976-77 academic year, was the first provincial transfer guide in Canada. The first edition of the Guide reported 1,775 course and program agreements involving 12 post-secondary institutions. In contrast, the 27th edition for the 2002-2003 academic year involved 27,504 transfer agreements and 36 institutions in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

The *Alberta Transfer Guide* is a reflection of the extent to which Alberta's post-secondary institutions are co-operating to reduce and eliminate obstacles to transferability. Its publication and distribution each spring is a major responsibility of Council. Preparation of each edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* is a dynamic process as new transfer agreements are continually being negotiated and current agreements are reviewed, revised or deleted. Marilyn Patton, Executive Officer, once again managed production of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* with the assistance of the institutional Contact Persons and the ACAT Secretariat. The twenty-seventh annual edition for the 2002-03 academic year was distributed extensively within Alberta to the registrar's office of all post-secondary institutions, student associations, high school principals and guidance counselors, Alberta Career Development Centres, and public libraries. It was also distributed to post-secondary institutions in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Post-secondary institutions and other organizations outside of these provinces received a letter informing them of the availability of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* online. In addition, the *Guide* was provided to students upon request who were unable to access the information online.

A number of institutions requested and received camera-ready copy of their entries in the *Transfer Guide* along with other relevant sections to reprint and distribute widely to students. These colleges were commended for working with Council to provide students with relevant transfer information.

Following Council's procedure for the review of transfer agreements, Contact Persons used the Contact Persons' Web Site to create new transfer agreements, amend existing agreements and/or terminate obsolete entries, for the preparation for the production of the 2003-04 edition of the *Transfer Guide*. The Secretariat received information regarding these additions and changes in February 2003 for verification. This ensures the information in the *2003-04 Alberta Transfer Guide* will reflect courses and programs offered during the 2003-04 academic year.

Online Alberta Transfer Guide

The database of transfer agreements is updated weekly and is the most current information available. The public can access information on transfer agreements through the Internet via the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. Using pre-programmed queries, students and advisors can find out which courses are transferable and to which institutions. Information on transfer agreements effective from 1993-94 to the present is available. Also on the site are admissions and transfer information for each post-secondary institution, including

hyperlinks to their Web sites and online help. Users can also download the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and the charts currently featured at the front of the *Transfer Guide*. These are posted in portable document format (PDF), which allows users to read the charts using Acrobat Reader software for which there is no charge when downloaded from Adobe's Web site. There are a number of links to other related sites, including the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS), which add further value to this Web site.

During the reporting period, the site had a monthly average of 176,697 successful hits. This is a 49% increase in usage since the previous reporting period.

The Web site address is www.acat.gov.ab.ca.

Contact Persons

Since 1976 Council has maintained a network of institutional representatives to facilitate communication with Council and among institutions. The work of these Contact Persons and their assistants is invaluable in relation to the production of the *Transfer Guide* and the collection of transfer patterns data, as well as in the day-to-day implementation of transfer agreements. The role and responsibilities of the Contact Persons are outlined in the *Handbook for Contact Persons*.

The Contact Persons' Web site is a password protected site where Contact Persons are able to initiate, review and authorize Transfer Credit Proposals and attach electronic supporting documents, typically course outlines. Once a transfer proposal is approved by the institutions involved, the agreement is verified by the ACAT Secretariat. It then becomes viewable by the public via the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. The system helps Contact Persons manage their transfer credit proposals as well as active transfer agreements; this can include amendments and/or revisions to active agreements. In addition, the site serves as an important communication tool for Contact Persons and the ACAT Secretariat. The site was used, on average, 496,085 times per month. This is a 47% increase in usage of this site.

The annual meeting of the Committee of Contact Persons with the Chair and Executive Officer was hosted by Grande Prairie Regional College on 23 October 2002. Delegates from 26 post-secondary institutions participated in the meeting. As well, 13 assistants of Contact Persons also attended. The topics discussed included future directions of ACAT, the common grading scale and high school transitions. There was also a session where the revised user's manual for the Contact Persons' Web site was presented.

ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER DEVELOPMENTS

Common Grading Scale

On the recommendation of the Minister's Working Group on Admissions and Transfer, in 2000, the Universities Coordinating Council formed a committee to explore the feasibility of all four universities in Alberta adopting a similar grading system.

At the time, Athabasca University used a percentage system, the University of Alberta used a 9-point system and variations of a 4-point alpha system were employed at the Universities of Calgary and Lethbridge. Some private university colleges used a 9-point system and others used 4-point alpha systems.

The committee, which was chaired by ACAT's former Chair, Dr. Terry Moore, recommended that universities consider adopting the following 4-point alpha grading:

Common Grading Scale

4.0 Grading Scale			
Descriptor	**Alpha Grade**	**4.0-Point Scale**	**Number of Intervals**
	A+	4.0	12
Excellent	A	4.0	11
	A-	3.7	10
	B+	3.3	9
Good	B	3.0	8
	B-	2.7	7
	C+	2.3	6
Satisfactory	C	2.0	5
	C-	1.7	4
Poor	D+	1.3	3
Minimal Pass	D	1.0	2
Failure	F [or F(S)]*	0.0	1

*NOTE: F(S) denotes eligibility of a student to apply for a supplemental examination in a course and is applicable only at post-secondary institutions where policies permit its use.

By June 2002 all four universities and the private university colleges in Alberta had agreed to adopt the 4.0 alpha grading system. The University of Lethbridge, the University of Calgary and Athabasca University are on the common scale while University of Alberta anticipates a September 2003 implementation. Discussion was then extended to the colleges and technical institutes. The ACAT Secretariat continues to monitor these discussions at the colleges and technical institutes. Fifteen colleges and technical institutes have adopted this scale by the end of the reporting period. Nine institutions plan a September 2003 implementation.

Student Organizations

During the reporting period, communication links were maintained with student organizations through student members, Matthew Glass of the Alberta College and Technical Institute Student Executive Council (ACTISEC) and Shirley Barg of the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS).

The Chair attended and made a presentation to the ACTISEC Leadership Conference in May 2002 and subsequently met with the Executive Director and ACAT representative.

Secondary – Post-Secondary Transitions

In this reporting period, Council continued to emphasize the admissions side of its mandate to ensure that students are able to make smooth transitions from high school to post-secondary programs. Council agreed to apply to admissions the kinds of processes and strategies that it has successfully developed with respect to transfer of courses and programs at the post-secondary level.

As in the previous reporting year, Council facilitated discussion of these changes with post-secondary institutions.

English Language Arts (ELA)

High school courses typically are used for admission to post-secondary programs. Therefore, when high school curriculum changes, the post-secondary institutions need to evaluate the courses for admission and prerequisite purposes. Such was the case with the significant changes to the high school English Language Arts curriculum.

During the previous reporting period, Council agreed to establish an English Language Arts Articulation Committee to help facilitate discussion of the new ELA courses and to aid in the decision-making regarding their use for admission and pre-requisite purposes. The committee produced a report which included comparative information about the current English 10, 20, 30/English 13, 23, 33 and the new ELA 10-1, 20-1, 30-1/ELA 10-2, 20-2, 30-2 course sequences. After reviewing the report, each post-secondary institution developed and submitted to ACAT an advising chart illustrating the pathways a student might follow from Grade 10 English Language Arts to post-secondary programs. The ACAT Secretariat coordinated collection of these charts, which can be used by both parents and students, and ensured their posting on the Alberta Learning Web site. The Web address is:
http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca./k_12/curriculum/bySubect/english/postup_E.asp

Future Curriculum Changes

In the future, Alberta Learning has plans to revise curriculum in other subject areas. Council agreed to use ad-hoc subject-specific articulation committees when needed for secondary to post-secondary articulation.

During the reporting period, a Social Studies Articulation Committee was formed. In the coming year, committee representatives will meet to discuss the rationale for the curriculum change and the requisite skills high school graduates needed in this area. At a future date the committee will reconvene to review the proposed program of studies, new resources, and revised examinations.

The Chair and Executive Officer have had preliminary discussions with the Director of Curriculum and anticipate that at a future date an articulation committee for new science courses will be needed.

Post-Secondary Program Articulation

In 1991 Council adopted a policy of facilitating program transfer issues meetings. Where warranted, Council would bring together the coordinators of particular programs to identify transfer issues that relate to differences in course content as well as program requirements and admission issues, and to explore appropriate potential solutions. This is consistent with Council's role to foster better communication among institutions and thus to improve understanding and co-operation on all matters related to transfer.

Ongoing Program Articulation Initiatives

During the year, program articulation activity continued in four areas: academic upgrading, biological sciences, education and engineering. The Executive Officer met with the Provincial Academic Upgrading Coordinators committee on 15 May and 4 October 2002 and 7 February 2003 to update the Academic Upgrading Courses chart for publication in the 2003-04 *Transfer Guide*. At these meetings updates on curriculum development and changes were provided to the Coordinators by program developers of Alberta Learning.

The primary topic of discussion at the Engineering program articulation meeting held on 4 December 2002 was curriculum/program changes and admission plans. Following the meeting, the Executive Officer worked with committee members and Contact Persons to ensure accurate student advising charts were published in the next edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and posted on the Council's Web site.

High School Transitions

Council continued its collaboration with Alberta Learning to study transitions that grade 12 students make into the adult learning system. A report titled "Post-Secondary Transitions in Alberta: Educational Outcomes of the 1999/00 Grade 12 Cohort" was produced. The report also included a follow-up study of the 1998/99 cohort to estimate the number of students who delayed entry to post-secondary study until September 2000.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

As learning may occur in a variety of settings, Council recognizes that it is essential that adult learners receive appropriate recognition for prior

demonstrated learning toward desired certificate, diploma or degree programs. Periodically Council publishes an inventory of institutional PLAR policies. The last inventory, which was produced and distributed in March 2001, under the title, "Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: Policies and Procedures at Selected Post-Secondary Institutions", contained policies of 15 post-secondary institutions. Council's Principles and Standards for the Recognition of Prior Learning are recorded in section G of Addendum C. Renewed Council activity in PLAR is anticipated in the coming year.

The Chair is also a member of the National Advisory Committee for the Fifth National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, which will be held in Winnipeg in 2003.

Transfer Infoline

Adult learners who are planning to start or return to post-secondary study and have questions about transfer can contact Council's Transfer Infoline for service. Students may access the service by e-mail through the Online Alberta Transfer Guide or by mail, fax, or toll-free telephone. Posters publicizing the service were distributed along with the *Alberta Transfer Guide* to high school counselors, student associations, and post-secondary institutions. The brochure, "University Transfer: Advice for University Transfer Program Students", revised in June 2002, provides answers to frequently asked questions about transfer. The brochure can be downloaded from Online Alberta Transfer Guide Web site at www.acat.gov.ab.ca. The most common questions from the Infoline related to university to university transfer, university to college transfer, interprovincial transfer, and out-of-country students wishing to study in Canada.

Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS)

The Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) is an Internet gateway to career, learning and employment information in Alberta. The Learning section of ALIS includes a link to the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. Council helped build awareness of ALIS by maintaining a reciprocal link from Council's Web Site to ALIS and by including a notice on the inside cover of the *Transfer Guide*. ALIS, which is located at www.alis.gov.ab.ca, is made possible through financial and administrative support provided by the government of Alberta. Council's Manager of Operations is a member of the ALIS Advisory Committee.

ACAT Transfer Info

This poster, directed at counselors and students, was distributed to over 16,000 teachers at annual Teacher's Conventions throughout the province.

Private Providers Policy

Recognizing that adult learners are served by a variety of providers, Council has a responsibility to students to facilitate course transfer agreements between private providers and post-secondary receiving institutions. Council's policy and

procedures for facilitating course transfer agreements between Alberta non-degree granting private providers and post-secondary receiving institutions are recorded in section F of Addendum C.

Institutions that request service under this policy work with the ACAT Secretariat to produce a fact sheet. The fact sheet presents, in standard format, information about private institutions that public institutions can request. Fact sheets are available to post-secondary institutions via the Contact Persons' Web site.

Duplicate Application Detection Project

The Duplicate Application Detection (DAD) project originated in 1992 and is coordinated by Council in conjunction with participating post-secondary institutions. The project has enabled the ACAT Secretariat to compare selected elements of new student application files from pairs of institutions to determine the extent of duplicate applications between institutions. The process is designed so that the identity of individual students is fully protected. In Fall 2002, there were 28 institutions that participated in the project. The study was conducted, results were produced and returned to the participating institutions, and trends were identified.

With the consent of participating institutions and as part of Alberta Learning's accountability initiative, the DAD database is used to generate information for several key performance indicator information sets regarding student transfer as well as demand.

Last year, Council directed the ACAT Secretariat to survey DAD delegates about the feasibility of conducting the project on a two or three-year cycle rather than annually. It was determined that there were adequate reasons to continue the DAD survey for the Fall 2002.

Transfer Patterns Study

Starting in Fall 1979 and continuing each year, Council has collected data from institutional Contact Persons for its study of transfer patterns. These data provide information regarding the volume of student transfer between and among post-secondary institutions in Alberta and from out-of-province post-secondary institutions. In September 1979, 3,092 students with prior post-secondary experience moved from one Alberta post-secondary institution to another. In comparison, in 2002, 9,270 students were admitted who had previously attended an Alberta post-secondary institution. There were 13,615 student transfers into or within the province in Fall 2002. Grant MacEwan College is the leading 'sending' institution and the University of Alberta is the leading 'receiving' institution.

Chair and Secretariat

Lucille Walter has served as Council Chair since August 2001. At that time, the position of Chair moved from a full-time contract position to a part-time voluntary

chair in keeping with similar positions on other Ministerially-appointed committees. The Secretariat, which also provides administration and professional support to the Private Colleges Accreditation Board, has become a branch of Alberta Learning in order to provide more support to both organizations. Marilyn Patton, who serves as Executive Officer to both organizations, is the Secretariat's Director. By the end of the reporting period, the Secretariat included two managers, a production assistant and an office manager.

This year, the Chair and Executive Officer participated in a system-wide consultation on the future of Alberta's post-secondary education system. The Council provided comment and input as the proposed legislative changes were developed. During this reporting period, the Council hosted the Assistant Deputy Minister of Adult Learning, who brought members up to date on this issue. New legislation is anticipated during the next reporting period.

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)

In June 2002, the Executive Officer was named Alberta's representative to a national working group on credit transfer. The Working Group was challenged to find ways of enhancing credit recognition. The Ministers adopted a statement of principles that was based on existing principles, such as those of ACAT, in October 2002. Discussion of these principles throughout all provinces and territories will occur during the next reporting period.

Communication

Through its Chair and Secretariat, Council communicates with post-secondary institutions, student organizations, other branches of Alberta Learning, and officials from jurisdictions outside the province. A special emphasis on communication directed the efforts of the Chair during this reporting period. The Chair continued to visit a number of post-secondary institutions. She also presented at the Leadership Conference of the Alberta College and Technical Institutes Student Executives and the Alberta Boards of Governors to raise awareness of the Council and its work. The Chair and Executive Officer held discussions with officials of Alberta Learning. This effort was focused on information sharing and exploration of opportunities for synergy and cooperation. As a result of these meetings, ACAT's involvement in research and national initiatives has improved. Together with the Executive Officer, the Chair met with the Executive Director and Co-chair of the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer to discuss common issues and approaches to admission and transfer.

ACAT traditionally uses its quarterly meetings to visit institutions on a rotating schedule. During the reporting period, Council initiated a new practice whereby the host institution gave a presentation about their programs and offerings and raised any issues regarding transfer or admission that they faced. This proved to be an excellent opportunity to familiarize members with the institutions around the province and to hear first-hand what issues face admissions and transfer

staff. This year ACAT visited Athabasca University, Mount Royal College, Grant MacEwan College and Concordia University College of Alberta.

Communication continued to be a focus of the Executive Officer as well. She met with a delegation from Thailand to discuss Alberta's transfer system. Future delegations are anticipated. On a more local scale, the Executive Officer presented at SAIT's Academic Council and Dean's Council.

BUSINESS PLAN GOALS AND RESULTS

Council's Business Plan, 2002 – 2005, identified strategies, actions, expected results and outcomes for achieving its four goals: admission, transfer, communication, and education and advocacy. Performance measures were identified for each goal along with the expected outcome. The following reports progress in achieving the goals.

GOAL: Admission - Students will be admitted to programs on the basis of the relevance and quality of their total educational experiences.

Performance Measure: Charts and other information regarding pathways from grade 10-level English Language Arts to post-secondary programs will be completed during 2002-2003 and will be disseminated to Alberta Learning and to post-secondary institutions.

Strategies: Promote smooth transitions as students move from high school to post-secondary programs.

Results: The ACAT Secretariat facilitated meetings between post-secondary faculty and administrators and Alberta Learning staff in preparation of 30-level curriculum being revised.

The English Language Arts curriculum changes to the 30-level courses were explained to the post-secondary representatives. As a result, all post-secondary institutions will recognize and accept ELA 30-1 where English 30 was previously accepted and ELA 30-2 is recognized and accepted for English 33.

Pathways charts for English Language Arts, for use by parents and students, are posted on the Alberta Learning Web site.

Performance Measure: "Post-Secondary Transitions in Alberta: Educational Outcomes of 1999-2000 Students" is produced.

Strategies: Collaborate to produce secondary to post-secondary student transition information.

Results: The Report on Transitions of the 1999 – 2000 Grade 12 cohort was produced.

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Performance Measure: Academic upgrading courses are accepted for post-secondary programs in lieu of those offered in regular high school programs.

Strategies: Encourage appropriate recognition of academic upgrading courses for admission to post-secondary programs.

Results: Published charts showing acceptance of academic upgrading courses for admission to college or technical institute courses, and for university or private university college programs appear in the 2002-2003 *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

Performance Measure: Academic upgrading courses are accepted for post-secondary programs in lieu of those offered in regular high school programs.

Strategies: Advocate for appropriate recognition of academic upgrading courses to fulfill high school diploma requirements.

Results: Needs continued effort.

Performance Measure: The DAD Report is published.

Strategies: Implement Duplicate Application Detection (DAD) project to identify trends.

Results: The ACAT Secretariat conducted the Duplicate Application Detection Fall 2002 project, produced data for institutional as well as system planning purposes, and identified trends.

Year over year comparisons:

- In September 2002, the number of learners who applied to programs at post-secondary institutions increased by 6.5% over the previous year.
- The number of learners who received offers of admission increased by 6.5% over the previous year.
- The number of learners who received offers of admission and subsequently attended a program increased by 8.7% over the previous year.

Trends from 1996 to 2002:

- 36.4% more individuals applied in 2002
- 38.4% more individuals received offers of admission in 2002
- 39.2% more individuals received offers of admission and were attending in 2002.

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GOAL: *Transfer* - Students will receive appropriate educational credit when they transfer from one Alberta program to another.

Performance Measure: Annually publish the Transfer Patterns Study to provide information on trends in student transfer.

Strategies: Produce system-wide principles, policies, and procedures to facilitate the student transfer system.
Monitor effectiveness of transfer system.

Results: Principles, policies and procedures reaffirmed as outlined in Addendum C of *Alberta Transfer Guide*.
Transfer Patterns Study, Fall 2002 completed and trends identified.

- 9270 learners were admitted who had previously attended another Alberta post-secondary institution
- 4799 learners with prior post-secondary experience were admitted to universities.
- Transfers to public colleges from other Alberta post-secondary institutions increased by 8.9%. This is a record.
- Transfers to private university colleges from other Alberta post-secondary institution increased by 22.2%
- From 1979 to 2002, a total of 92,230 students transferred to universities.
- From 1979 to 2002, a total of 44,957 students from seven public colleges with university transfer programs transferred to universities.
- From 1979 to 2002, a total of 42,811 students transferred to public colleges.
- From 1979 to 2002, a total of 31,110 students transferred to technical institutes.

Performance Measure: *Alberta Transfer Guide* is published and the Online Alberta Transfer Guide is updated.

Strategies: Ensure continuing accuracy of transfer agreements.

Results: *2002-2003 Alberta Transfer Guide* was published

- Total number of transfer agreements was 27,504.
- Print run of *Guide* was 4800 copies.
- Transfer agreements are searchable on the Online Transfer Guide at: www.gov.acat.ab.ca

Performance Measure: Transfer advising charts are accurate and published in a timely manner.

Strategies: Improve program articulation.

Results: Engineering program articulation charts improved.
Program articulation charts for Engineering and Biological Sciences included in the *Guide*.

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Performance Measure: Annually provide evidence of the increased opportunities for student transfer by reporting on the number of course transfer agreements each year. Number of career laddering opportunities increases each year. Private Provider Fact Sheets are available to post-secondary institutions.

Strategies: Enlarge transfer opportunities.

Results: There were 26,932 course institutional transfer agreements and 572 program transfer agreements for a combined total of 27,504 course and program transfer agreements published in Section 3 of the *2002-2003 Alberta Transfer Guide*. All Private Provider Fact Sheets are available on the Contact Persons Web site.

Strategies: Advocate for the development of effective institutional policies and procedures for assessment of prior learning as well as system-wide recognition of prior learning assessments.

Results: ACAT Chair was appointed to national conference planning committee on PLAR.

GOAL:
Communication:
Learners will have access to current, accurate information on admission and transfer policies as well as course and program transfer opportunities.

Performance Measure: Annually report participation in the student transfer system as shown by the number of institutions that negotiated transfer agreements for publication in the *Alberta Transfer Guide*. Annually provide evidence of procedures to assure accuracy of transfer information in the *Transfer Guide* and the Online Alberta Transfer Guide.

Strategies: Provide information to support students transferring to Alberta institutions so they can make informed decisions as they plan their studies.

Results: The *2002-2003 Alberta Transfer Guide* contained transfer agreements involving 36 post-secondary institutions.

The ACAT Secretariat continued to implement strict quality control procedures to ensure accuracy of transfer information in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. In July 2002, an evaluation was sent to the Contact Persons regarding the redesigned web site. The information obtained from the evaluation assisted in the redevelopment of the Contact Persons' Web Site User's Manual. It was presented and distributed at the annual meeting of the Committee of Contact Persons during a special training session. The *Handbook for Contact Persons* was updated and distributed in early October and was the focus of discussion at the meeting. Prior to the end of the February due date for *Transfer Guide* changes, a first draft of the 28th edition of the Guide was made available to Contact Persons via their Web Site.

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GOAL:
***Education and Advocacy* – As ACAT advocates for best practices on admissions and transfer in Alberta, stakeholders will be informed about its benefits. As other jurisdictions begin to establish their own admissions and transfer systems, the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer will serve as a model and will provide encouragement and advice on best practices.**

Performance Measure Anecdotal evidence will show that Alberta learners, those who advise them, and other stakeholders will be more aware of the need for awareness of the transfer system as they do post-secondary and career planning.

Strategies: Educate students and other stakeholders about the benefits of being informed about the Alberta admissions and transfer system.

Results: The Chair made several presentations to students and parents including a parent information evening at Bow Valley College, and the ACTISEC Leadership Conference. During the reporting period, the Chair visited 12 post-secondary institutions and discussed transfer issues with staff.

The Executive Officer is Alberta's representative on the CMEC Working Group on Transfer Credit. On request, advice and consultation was provided to other jurisdictions, both nationally and internationally, on the development of an admissions and transfer system.

Strategies: Advocate for inter-provincial portability of student learning.

Results: The *2002-2003 Alberta Transfer Guide* is available across Canada via the Internet. The Executive Officer participated on a CMEC Working Group.

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ADDENDUM A

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

During the year, membership on Council was increased to include an additional member from the universities sector. Student members typically serve for one year, reflecting their association with their student organizations. The following were members of Council during the reporting year.

Shirley Barg	University students (from August 2002)
Ed Behnke	Public colleges member (from August 2002)
Fred Carnew	Public member (from February 2003)
Terry Cooper	Public colleges member (through September 2002)
Anne Marie Decore	Universities member (through August 2002)
Catherine Eddy	Private university colleges member
Matthew Glass	College and technical institutes students (from August 2002)
Peter Haney	Universities member
Gretchen Hess	Universities member (from August 2002)
Shirley Holloway	Technical institutes member (through September 2002)
Judith Hughes	Universities member
Vance MacNichol	Public member
Rick Morrow	Secondary system member from Alberta Learning
Lynne Mulder	Public colleges member (from August 2002)
Gord Nixon	Technical institutes member (from August 2002)
Peggy Patterson	Universities member (through September 2002)
Kevin Paul	Universities member (from November 2002)
Harry Reding	Public member (through November 2002)
Jean Valgardson	Public colleges member
Vanessa Wood	Student member (through August 2002)
Kory Zwack	Student member (through August 2002)
Lucille Walter	Chair
Marilyn Patton	Executive Officer

ADDENDUM B

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following Terms of Reference were adopted by Council motion on 14 February 1975:

1. The Council shall review current regulations, proposals and practices for admissions and transfer which have been generated by Alberta Learning and by institutions and subsystems for the purpose of identifying those guidelines and procedures applicable to all institutions within the system of advanced education.

2. The Council shall develop procedures by which admissions and transfer policies, guidelines and procedures are granted system-wide approval.

3. The Council shall compile, maintain and disseminate a registry of all existing admissions and transfer arrangements within the Alberta system of advanced education.

4. The Council shall monitor the effectiveness of admissions and transfer policies and practices throughout the advanced education system; to this end it may carry out, or request institutions to carry out appropriate studies.

5. The Council shall recommend to Alberta Learning and to institutions revisions of policies, guidelines and procedures as it deems necessary.

6. Acting within the provisions of existing legislation, the Council shall, upon the written request of an institution, serve as mediator in resolving inter-institutional admission and transfer problems. (The Council will not deal with requests by individuals).

7. In the event that agreement cannot be reached through mediation, the Council shall, upon written request by the institutions concerned, serve as arbitrator.

8. In fulfilling its arbitration role, the Council shall establish arbitration procedures, inform the institutions of these procedures, and inform the institutions of its decisions, which shall be final and binding.

9. The Council shall advise the Minister of any legislative changes which it deems necessary.

10. The Council, at the request of the Minister or institutions, shall comment on unresolved transfer problems related to proposed programs.

11. The Council shall report annually to the Minister of Learning on its activities.

12. The Council will operate with the support of: a) Council members, to be reimbursed by Alberta Learning for out-of-pocket expenses incurred; b) the Chair, to be paid an appropriate honorarium; and c) an executive secretary and such other necessary resources and services to be made available by Alberta Learning as required by the Council in the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

ADDENDUM C
COUNCIL PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. CONTEXT

1. Role and Composition

The role of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer is to be a catalyst for change and an advocate for learners in the areas of post-secondary admission and transfer. To carry out its role Council provides leadership and direction in the improvement of educational opportunities for Alberta students through inter-institutional transfer. This requires a commitment to improving communication among Alberta post-secondary institutions, and thus to promote the advantages of a system of education, with all that this means for educational planning for the benefit of learners.

In the fulfillment of its role, Council is engaged in the following activities:

(a) **leadership** — including the development and formulation of policies and procedures whereby transfer credit for courses and programs may be negotiated.

(b) **communication** — Council is committed to improving communication on matters regarding admissions and transfer.

(c) **publication** — primarily the production and distribution of a yearly *Transfer Guide* listing all transfer credit arrangements for courses and programs within the Alberta post-secondary system, together with statements of relevant policies and procedures. The ACAT Secretariat also produces periodic New Transfer Agreements reports, a *Handbook for Contact Persons*, the yearly Transfer Patterns tables, and an *Annual Report*.

(d) **mediation** — as requested by institutions within the system, to resolve complaints or disputes concerning transfer arrangements and credits, and thus to ensure that the best interests of students are served.

(e) **applied research** — on matters related to the transfer of students throughout the system.

The 15 member Council which is appointed by the Minister of Learning is an independent body which reports annually to the Minister. Council membership includes the Chair, 2 members of the public, 2 student members, 4 members nominated by the Universities Co-ordinating Council, 4 members nominated by the Council of College and Technical Institute Presidents, 1 member nominated by the Private Colleges Co-ordinating Council, and 1 secondary system member from Alberta Learning. Professional support, including service of an Executive Officer, is supplied by Alberta Learning.

The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer usually meets 4 times a year, generally at institutions.

2. Overview of the Post-secondary System

The Council's activities are directed primarily towards the Alberta post-secondary system, which includes 4 universities, The Banff Centre, 15 public colleges, 2 institutes of technology, and 6 private university colleges, and other private colleges. There are, in addition, a number of private non-affiliated institutions, some of which may offer courses which have transfer potential. Although the Council's mandate is directed towards the Alberta post-secondary system, the Council is sensitive to student transferability involving institutions outside of the province. For this reason the *Alberta Transfer Guide* is distributed across Canada as well as the United States.

3. Types of Transfer

Within the system of post-secondary institutions, transfer of credit for courses or programs may occur among institutions within a sector (for example, between public colleges) or among institutions of different types (for example, from a vocational college to a college). Transfer arrangements published in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* include courses and programs transferable to universities and private university colleges and those transferable to colleges and technical institutes.

4. Definition of Terms

In dealing with matters relating to transfer, there are several commonly used terms which may require clarification. Some of the more important are:

Accessibility: the degree of openness of institutions to students seeking admission to their program. (See Principle "d".)

Advance credit: the award of credit in given courses or programs on the basis of formal and informal learning experiences including: 1) work experience, 2) maturity/life experience, 3) unstructured educational experiences such as self-study, 4) structured educational activity. (See Transfer credit.)

Affiliation: a formal agreement of association or co-operation between two institutions whereby some courses and programs offered by the sending institution are substantially the same as those offered by the receiving institution. Transfer credit is thereby awarded.

Receiving institution: an institution to which students transfer course or program credits acquired at another institution. (See Sending institution.)

Reciprocal bilateral transfer agreement: a transfer agreement that has been negotiated between two institutions whereby Institution A agrees to accept the course (or cluster of courses) taken at Institution B in lieu of its own course (or cluster of courses) and reciprocally, Institution B agrees to accept the course (or cluster of courses) taken at Institution A in lieu of its own course (or cluster of courses). Therefore, reciprocal bilateral agreements are always two-way agreements. (See Unidirectional bilateral transfer agreements.)

Selection criteria: categories of qualification, capabilities, or experience (academic or other) which provide the basis for screening and admission (or rejection) of students to programs.

Sending institution: an institution from which students may transfer course or program credits to programs at another institution. (See Receiving institution.)

Transfer: the mobility of students among post-secondary institutions on the basis of their having transfer credit. (See Transfer credit.)

Transfer courses: courses delivered by a sending institution as courses which correspond in description to courses of a particular institution.

Transfer credit: an advance credit awarded on the basis of successful completion of structured educational activities at a post-secondary institution. (See Advance credit.)

Transferable courses: courses developed by an institution to meet its own program objectives but which have transfer potential. Transfer may be negotiated either on the basis of equivalence or of relevance to programs or courses at another institution.

Unidirectional bilateral transfer agreement: a transfer agreement negotiated between a sending institution and a receiving institution which is primarily intended to be one-way. In practice, advance credit for courses involved in an agreement usually will be awarded at either institution, particularly when the agreement involves courses that are part of a university transfer program. However, in some cases credit will not be awarded in the opposite direction; for example, Institution A may agree to accept Institution B's cluster of transferable courses in lieu of one of its own courses and have the agreement entered in the *Transfer Guide*. However, it might not be appropriate for Institution B conversely to award transfer credits for the cluster of courses if a student with the one course from Institution A presented it for advanced credit assessment. (See Reciprocal bilateral transfer agreement.)

Virtual equivalence: See Principle "b".

B. PRINCIPLES

The Council endorses the following as basic to its purpose and activities:

(a) Student access to higher education and the opportunity for student mobility among institutions of higher education in Alberta shall be optimized.

Barriers to student mobility shall be minimized. The integrity of educational programs and certification must, however, be maintained. A student should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated nor should more transfer credit be granted than previous learning experiences would warrant for successful completion of the program.

(b) Negotiation of opportunities for student mobility shall be based on the recognition that while learning experiences may differ in a variety of ways, their substance may be virtually equivalent in terms of content and rigour.

Insofar as possible, transfer arrangements should allow for maximum recognition of previous learning experiences. The concept of **virtual equivalence** is vital to such arrangements.

(c) Effective academic advising and career counselling and optimum mobility require that the student have prior knowledge of at least the minimum transfer credit which can be awarded.

The *Alberta Transfer Guide* indicates the minimum transfer credit which is available for prior post-secondary educational experience upon admission to a post-secondary institution. Additional transfer credit may be negotiable on an individual basis.

(d) Although responsibility for higher education is shared among various constituents, individual institutions have the primary responsibility for instructional programs. This responsibility

includes program design and delivery, determination of academic prerequisites and student admission criteria, and certification of the academic achievement of students.

In respect of student access to institutions and programs, it is to be emphasized that factors in addition to academic prerequisites often are employed as admission criteria. That is, while possession of academic prerequisites makes an applicant eligible for admission, it does not **guarantee** admission to an institution or to a particular program.

(e) Institutions have the responsibility and the prerogative to investigate the total educational preparation of applicants seeking admission.

Such investigation is intended to determine admissibility and appropriate transfer credit, and to counsel applicants. The relevance and quality of the applicant's most recent educational experiences should be the basis for admissibility and for transfer decisions unless such consideration would unfairly disadvantage the applicant. Differences in earlier preparation should not adversely affect consideration of the applicant. (See Principle "b" re **virtual equivalence**.)

(f) After students are granted admission to an institution under a transfer arrangement, they shall be granted the same rights and privileges as students who began their studies at the institution.

C. A POLICY FOR ADMISSION AND TRANSFER OF CREDIT AMONG ALBERTA POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

1. Admission

Admission to a course or program will be granted to any applicant who has fulfilled the admission requirements for such course or program as established by the receiving institution. Where selection procedures are involved in admission to a program, each applicant shall be treated on the same basis as any other person seeking admission to that program.

In the case of students transferring from public colleges and technical institutes to degree-granting institutions, in lieu of the general admission requirement listed above, admission will be granted to any applicant who, upon successful completion of at least a full year's study at the sending institution, is recommended in writing by that institution as having satisfied the **appropriate** matriculation requirements or their equivalent. This is referred to as the Letter of Recommendation admissions category.

2. Transfer of credits

Subject to the above requirements there shall be two major transfer arrangements:

(a) Transferable courses and programs:

These are developed by a sending institution to meet its own program and objectives, and bear its own numbers and descriptions. Transfer may be negotiated either on the basis of equivalence, or of relevance. The principle of **equivalence** refers to courses and programs of the sending institution which are identical or similar to those of the receiving institution. The principle of **relevance** refers to courses of the sending institution which are in the same areas or disciplines and at the levels of programs offered by the receiving institution, and are therefore appropriate for credit at the receiving institution.

Credits awarded in this category may involve special inter-institutional arrangements or individual assessment.

(b) Transfer courses and programs:

These are delivered by a sending institution as courses and programs which correspond in description to those of the receiving institution.

Among universities, transfer has normally been assessed on an individual basis by the receiving institution. Formally approved reciprocal transfer agreements are listed in Section IV of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

D. PROCEDURES FOR TRANSFER OF CREDIT AMONG ALBERTA POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

To facilitate the negotiation of transfer arrangements among post-secondary institutions, the Council has established the following set of procedures.

Objective

These procedures are designed to provide a mechanism for the negotiation of transfer and transferable courses and programs, and for their inclusion in the *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

Categories

Courses and programs proposed for transfer credit are of two main types, each of which involves a

different relationship between the sending and receiving institution.

1. **Transferable Courses/Courses with Transfer Potential**

   In negotiations of transfer credit for transferable courses, the sending institution shall supply the receiving institution with the following information: (a) course description, title, grading practices, weighting and outline, (b) textbooks and other resource materials, (c) qualifications required for an instructor. Additional information may be required at stated intervals for review purposes, or at the discretion of the receiving institutions.

2. **Transfer Courses/Courses in Transfer Programs**

   In negotiations of transfer credit for transfer courses, the sending institution shall supply the receiving institution with the following information: (a) course description, (b) textbooks and other resource materials, (c) qualifications required for an instructor.

Transfer credit is based on initial negotiations, when the course is first offered by the sending institution. Subsequent negotiations and concurrence of the receiving institution are required where, in the view of the receiving institution, course revisions by the sending institution are sufficiently substantial to affect the transfer credit which has been negotiated.

Procedures

1. Each institution shall identify a Contact Person (e.g., Registrar or Admissions Officer) who will be responsible for both internal and external distribution of formal transfer proposals and responses.

2. Each institution shall, through its Contact Person, maintain and provide on request from other institutions (a) a list of other important institutional contacts for the purpose of facilitating appropriate preliminary discussions, and (b) a description of the internal procedures followed in the institution for the development and/or evaluation of proposals for transfer arrangements.

3. It is expected that proposals for credit will be processed as expeditiously as possible and formalized by means of the Council's Transfer Credit Proposal Form. If the transfer proposal is acceptable, the receiving institution will inform the other institutions in the system accordingly. The transfer normally will be honoured within the sub-system of which the receiving institution is a constituent.

4. If the transfer proposal is not acceptable, the receiving institution shall supply in writing, to the sending institution, the reason for this decision.

5. In the event that agreement has not been reached pursuant to (3) and (4), an institution may submit to the Council a written request for mediation. Where, in its opinion, the Council determines that a dispute concerning transfer exists, the Council may mediate to resolve the dispute.

6. In the event that the agreement cannot be reached pursuant to (5), the institutions in dispute may agree to submit the dispute to Council for arbitration. The Council will then establish procedures for the resolution of the dispute, and issue its decision resolving the dispute. The arbitration decision of the Council shall be final and without appeal or review.

7. Transfer arrangements are to be regarded as relatively enduring bilateral agreements — to be altered, amended or deleted only after **mutual consultation**. Regular discussion of existing transfer arrangements should take place between sending and receiving institutions. Any institution planning program or course changes which could bear on existing transfer arrangements as recorded in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* shall, insofar as possible, inform those institutions which would be primarily affected — subject, where necessary, to renegotiation. In cases where renegotiation of a transfer agreement is requested by either a sending or receiving institution, the onus is on the institution requesting the change to provide the other institution with **sufficient notice** and lead-time to permit renegotiation before the next edition of the *Transfer Guide*.

8. Renegotiation of transfer arrangements is subject to the same guidelines as for the initial negotiations (i.e., 3-6).

9. When a new agreement has been negotiated, it replaces the old agreement in the next edition of the *Transfer Guide*.

E. INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Within the context of policies and procedures of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, each institution has particular requirements and practices for admission of students and the award of transfer credit. These institutional requirements are summarized in Section II of the annual *Alberta Transfer Guide*. Students who are planning to transfer are advised to refer to the appropriate institutional calendar and to consult with the Registrar's Office at the receiving institution.

F. PRIVATE PROVIDERS POLICY
A policy for facilitating course transfer agreements between Alberta non degree -granting private providers and post-secondary receiving institutions

Framework

The primary goal of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) is to provide leadership and direction in the improvement and enlargement of educational opportunities for Alberta's students through inter-institutional transfer.

To this end, Council has a continuing responsibility for facilitating improvement in communications and working relationships among institutions regarding the admission of transfer students and the award of transfer credit. Recognizing that adult learners are served by a variety of providers, not all of which receive operating grants from Alberta Learning, Council has developed the following policy and procedure to facilitate the commencement of negotiation between private providers of adult learning and post-secondary receiving institutions currently served by Council. The policy is intended to serve adult learners by improving transferability, where academically appropriate, between courses and programs of private providers of adult learning and post-secondary receiving institutions currently served by Council.

Students, post-secondary institutions, and the public will benefit from improved communication. By extending the coverage of Council's principles, policies and procedures, the needs of adult learners will be better served. The policy will help students by facilitating the transferability of courses among providers in Alberta's adult learning system.

Policy

Through its procedures, Council will facilitate communication among Alberta providers of adult learning, including those that do not receive operating grants from Alberta Learning, so that student access and the opportunity for student transfer among providers of adult learning in Alberta is optimized.

Procedure

The objective of the procedure is to facilitate student transfer from programs of private providers operating in Alberta. This procedure is non-mandatory and non-regulatory. The procedure enables the ACAT Secretariat to provide information in a standard format in order to assist receiving institutions currently served by Council to decide whether or not to enter into transfer negotiations with a private provider.

1. A private provider may contact the ACAT Secretariat if it wishes to negotiate transfer agreements with a post-secondary receiving institution presently entered in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and have these agreements recorded in Council's registry of admission and transfer agreements.

2. The ACAT Secretariat then will provide the chief executive officer of the private provider with a copy of Council's Principles, Policies, and Procedures and request the private provider to formally commit itself to abide by them in its practices as both a receiver and sender of students. At the same time, a questionnaire will be sent to the private provider.

3. When the private provider has formally committed itself to abide by Council's Principles, Policies, and Procedures, and has provided a response to the questionnaire, the ACAT Secretariat will prepare a "Fact Sheet" on the private provider. A draft copy will be sent to the private provider for verification.

4. The ACAT Secretariat may seek further information as it sees fit and may request a meeting with officers of the private provider.

5. When the "Fact Sheet" is finalized, the ACAT Secretariat will make it available to potential receiving institutions at the request of the receiving institution. The "Fact Sheet" is intended to assist the potential receiving institution in determining whether it is appropriate to proceed with negotiations for course or program transfer.

6. When a receiving institution informs the ACAT Secretariat that it is prepared to consider course or program transfer credit proposals, the ACAT Secretariat may ask the private provider to name an official to whom and from whom communication on admission and transfer matters will be directed.

7. The ACAT Secretariat will then send the appropriate Council transfer credit proposal forms to the official at the private provider for use in formalizing transfer agreements.

8. If a receiving institution approves a transfer credit proposal from the private provider, it will follow Council's procedure and return the signed transfer credit proposal form to the official at the private provider with the original to the ACAT Secretariat.

9. Under section 3 of its Terms of Reference, Council will include information on the transfer agreement in its registry of admissions and transfer arrangements.

G. PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Context

Adult learners may desire recognition of their prior learning for a variety of goals including employment, further education, occupational/professional certification, and personal satisfaction. To assist adult learners to further their education and in keeping with its Terms of Reference, Council encourages post-secondary institutions to develop prior learning assessments that are granted system-wide recognition. The award of transfer credit in given courses or programs may be based on formal or informal learning experiences including: (1) work experience, (2) maturity/life experience, (3) unstructured educational experiences such as self-study, and (4) structured educational activity. In Alberta, transfer agreements covering formal courses and programs are recorded in the *Alberta Transfer Guide*. By extending recognition of prior learning to include all four varieties of learning, service to adult learners will be improved. Recognized prior learning should be transferable among programs within and beyond the post-secondary institution when it is appropriate to do so.

Framework

As learning may occur in a variety of settings, it is essential that adult learners receive appropriate recognition for prior demonstrated learning toward desired certificate, diploma or degree programs. Basic to the purpose and activity of the recognition of prior learning is Council's **principle (a)**:

> Student access to higher education and the opportunity for student mobility among institutions of higher education in Alberta shall be optimized.
>
> Barriers to student mobility shall be minimized. The integrity of educational programs and certification must, however, be maintained. **A student should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated nor should more transfer credit be granted than previous learning experiences would warrant for successful completion of the program.**

Council encourages institutions to develop procedures for the assessment of demonstrated prior learning. In keeping with its terms of reference, Council also encourages the development of procedures by which the recognized prior learning then receives system-wide recognition consistent with the educational mandates of post-secondary institutions. Recognized prior learning should be portable.

Academic principles

1. Recognition of prior learning should be based on demonstrated learning.
2. Recognition should be appropriate to the course or program in which it is accepted.
3. Recognition of prior learning should be consistent with the achievement levels required by the post-secondary program in which it is accepted.
4. Recognition of prior learning should be for learning that has a balance, appropriate to the subject, between theory and practical application.
5. Assessment of prior learning by post-secondary institutions should be made by content specialists, with external advice as necessary.

Administrative standards

1. Official notation of the recognition of prior learning on post-secondary institution transcripts and student records should be consistent with the institution's policies and procedures relating to maintenance of student records.
2. Institutional policies and procedures applied to assessment should be fully disclosed; e.g. in the calendar.
3. All personnel involved in the assessment of prior learning should receive training for the functions they perform, and there should be provision for their continued professional development in areas related to recognition of prior learning.
4. Institutional recognition of prior learning policies and practices should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed. In keeping with its terms of reference, Council shall monitor the effectiveness of recognition of prior learning policies and practices within the Alberta post-secondary system.

ADDENDUM D

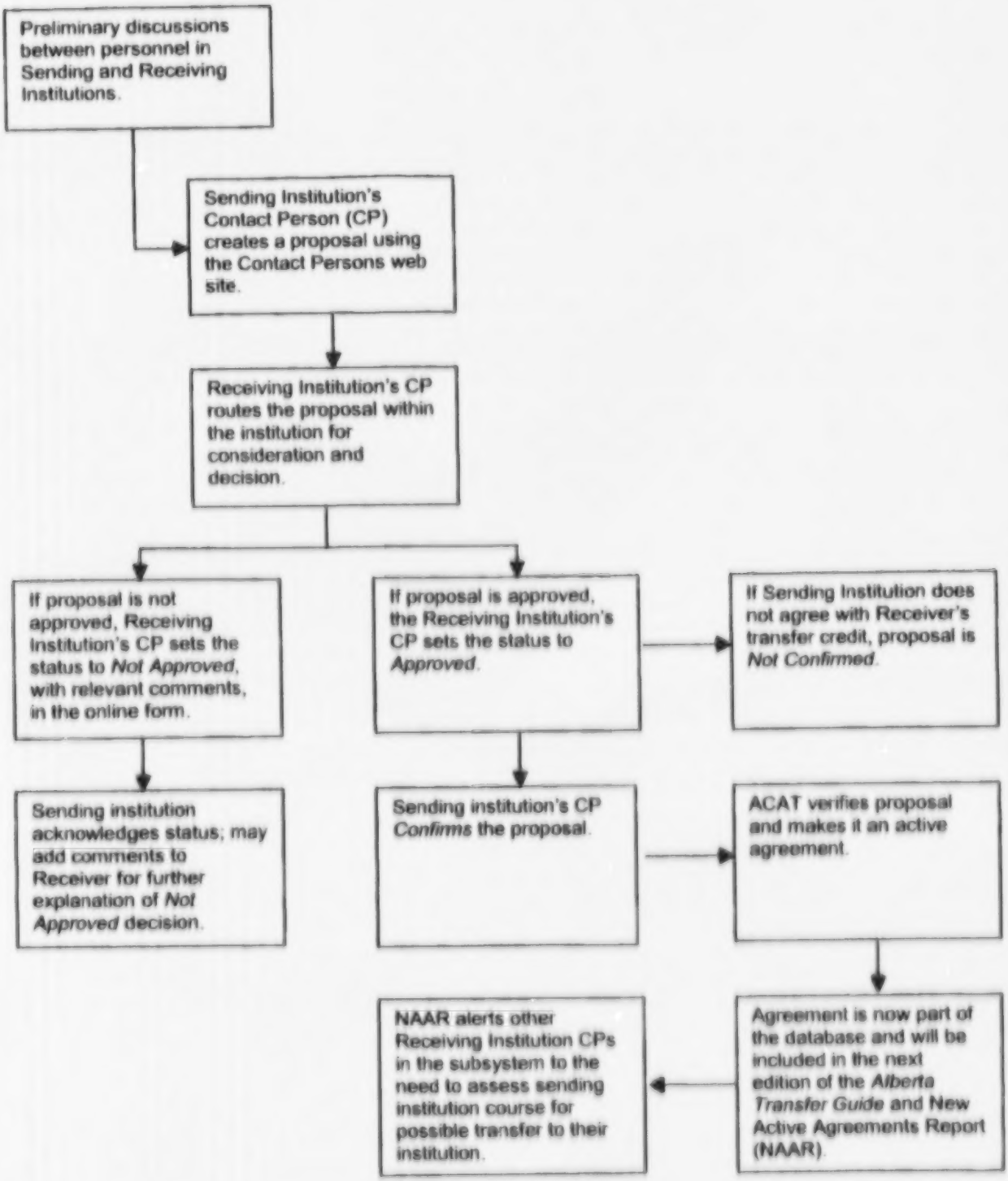
ALBERTA TRANSFER MODEL

Since its inception, Council has evolved the following approach for organizing transfer agreements among Alberta institutions. Council's Principles, Policies and Procedures provide the framework for the negotiation of transfer agreements between institutions. When preliminary discussions between personnel in the sending and receiving institutions indicate that a transfer agreement for a particular course or program is desirable and feasible, the Contact Person's Web Site is used by both institutions' Contact Persons to initiate and finalize formal transfer agreements. If the receiving institution approves the proposed agreement, it is recorded in the database for publication in the next edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and inclusion in the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. The accompanying chart illustrates the sequence of steps in this process.

Transfer agreements are regarded as relatively stable bilateral agreements. However, programs and their constituent courses undergo change, with revisions from time to time to such aspects as admission requirements, program requirements, and content. Council recommends that regular discussion of existing transfer agreements take place between sending and receiving institutions. Changes may require renegotiation of transfer agreements and resulting changes will be reflected in the database.

In accordance with its terms of reference, Council compiles, maintains and disseminates a registry of admission policies respecting transfer students and duly negotiated transfer agreements within the Alberta system of advanced education. Through direct consultation with both sending and receiving institutions, Council monitors the current accuracy of all transfer agreements which are included in the database and published in each edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*. First published in 1976, the annual *Alberta Transfer Guide* has been established both within and outside Alberta as the official statement of transfer agreements, and is considered indispensable for transfer operations within the province. It is broadly used by jurisdictions elsewhere in support of Alberta students transferring there, and more generally as information about the kinds of transfer agreements developed in this province with the support of Council.

Alberta Transfer Model
Transfer Agreement Process


Preliminary discussions between personnel in Sending and Receiving Institutions.
Sending Institution's Contact Person (CP) creates a proposal using the Contact Persons web site.
Receiving Institution's CP routes the proposal within the institution for consideration and decision.
If proposal is not approved, Receiving Institution's CP sets the status to *Not Approved*, with relevant comments, in the online form.
If proposal is approved, the Receiving Institution's CP sets the status to *Approved*.
If Sending Institution does not agree with Receiver's transfer credit, proposal is *Not Confirmed*.
Sending institution acknowledges status; may add comments to Receiver for further explanation of *Not Approved* decision.
Sending institution's CP *Confirms* the proposal.
ACAT verifies proposal and makes it an active agreement.
NAAR alerts other Receiving Institution CPs in the subsystem to the need to assess sending institution course for possible transfer to their institution.
Agreement is now part of the database and will be included in the next edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and New Active Agreements Report (NAAR).

Source: Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

ADDENDUM E

LIST OF COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED OR AVAILABLE IN 2002-2003

2002-2003 Alberta Transfer Guide

Twenty-Seventh Annual Report, 2001-2002

Business Plan, 2002 - 2005

ACAT Activities Chart, revised March 2000

Duplicate Application Detection Project, Fall 2002
Reports and Summary Tables
Trends, 1996-2002

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: Policies and Procedures at Selected Post-Secondary Institutions, March 2001

Recommended Practices for Officially Recording the Evaluation and Recognition of Prior Learning, March 1997

University Transfer: Advice for University Transfer Program Students, brochure (revised June 2002)

Transfer Patterns Study, Fall 2002
Fall 2002 Report
Part One: Mobility Tables

Transfer Patterns Studies, 1979-2002, Extracts by Sector

Handbook for Contact Persons (revised September 2002)

Contact Persons' Web Site Users Manual, October 2002

[With Alberta Learning] *Post-Secondary Transitions in Alberta: Educational Outcomes of the 1999/2000 Grade 12 Cohort*, August 2001

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